

REMARKS

Reconsideration and reexamination are requested in view of the above amendments and following remarks. Claims 1, 4, 5 and 9-12 are amended. Claims 1-12 are pending.

Applicants note that U.S. 6,725,538 cited by the Examiner in rejecting claims 1-9 is not listed on Form PTO-892 or on Applicant's Form-1449. Applicants request that the Examiner list this patent on a Form PTO-892 to ensure that the patent will be listed on the front page of any subsequently issued patent.

I. Specification amendments

The specification has been amended to remove the underlining from the word on page 1 and to improve the form of other portions of the disclosure. No new matter has been added.

II. Claim amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to improve the form thereof for U.S. practice. In addition, "placed on" has been changed to "disposed at". This change is supported by the original disclosure, for example Figures 5 and 7.

Claims 4, 5 and 12 have been amended to correct typographical errors and improve the form thereof for U.S. practice.

Claims 9, 10 and 11 are amended to recite the guide plate as having a first major surface and a second major surface opposite the first major surface. This amendment is supported by the original disclosure, for example page 9, lines 9-11.

Claims 9 and 11 also recite that the first major surface faces generally toward an intended viewer. This amendment is supported by the original disclosure, for example Figure 5.

In addition, claims 9, 10 and 11 have been amended to more positively recite the entrance end plane and the emission end plane.

No new matter has been added.

III. Claim rejections

Claims 1-8 are rejected under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent 6,725,538 to Sato.

Claims 9-12 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,469,755 to Adachi et al. (Adachi).

Applicants respectfully traverse each of these rejections and reconsideration is requested in view of the following.

A. Claims 1-8

The rejection for obviousness-type double patenting is in error as there is neither a common inventor nor a common assignee between Sato and the current application. The current application is assigned to Honda Motor Co. and names inventors Kushida and Katayama as inventors. In contrast, Sato is assigned to Ultrex Corporation and names inventor Sato.

Since there is neither a common inventor nor a common assignee, an obviousness-type double patenting rejection is improper. See MPEP 804.

Further, Sato does not disclose or claim subject matter that even remotely relates to Applicant's claims. Sato discloses and claims a method of connecting a terminal to a conductor. On the other hand, Applicant's claims are directed to a vehicle display device or a light guide plate for a vehicle display device. Even if Sato is considered prior art against Applicant's claims, the claims are neither anticipated by, nor obvious in view of, Sato.

B. Claims 9 and 12

Adachi does not teach or suggest a light guide plate as claimed that includes a first major surface facing toward an intended viewer, and an emission end plane that includes a plurality of planes having different inclination angles. In Adachi, the reflecting planes 2302A are not formed in an emission end plane (see Figure 20; column 21, lines 35-52). Instead, the planes 2302A in Adachi are formed in a surface 2302B of the light guide 2302 (the surface 2302B that is opposite the surface 2302C that in use faces towards an intended viewer).

Further, light is not emitted from the surface 2302B so the surface 2302B cannot be considered an emission end plane.

The rejection asserts that it would be obvious to use a liquid crystal display, such as taught by Adachi, as a means for display as part of the instrument panel to be viewed by the driver. Even assuming that the liquid crystal display of Adachi is used on an instrument panel as suggested in the rejection, the light guide element 2302 of the liquid crystal display of Adachi would not meet the requirements of claim 9, namely a first major surface facing toward an intended viewer, and an emission end plane that includes a plurality of planes having different inclination angles.

Claim 12 depends from claim 9 and is patentable along with claim 9 and need not be separately distinguished at this time. Applicants reserve the right to file additional arguments at a later date specifically addressing claim 12.

C. Claim 10

Adachi does not teach or suggest a light guide plate as claimed that includes an emission end plane that is frosted. There is no disclosure in Adachi that any portion of the light guide 2302, let alone an emission end plane of the light guide, is frosted.

The rejection asserts that it would be obvious to use a liquid crystal display, such as taught by Adachi, as a means for display as part of the instrument panel to be viewed by the driver. Even assuming that the liquid crystal display of Adachi is used on an instrument panel as suggested in the rejection, the light guide element 2302 of the liquid crystal display of Adachi would not meet the requirements of claim 10, namely an emission end plane that is frosted.

D. Claim 11

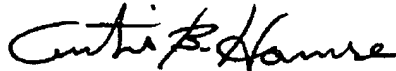
Adachi does not teach or suggest a light guide plate as claimed that includes a first major surface facing toward an intended viewer, an emission end plane that emits the light, and a groove formed in the first major surface. In Adachi, light is emitted from the surface 2302C so that is the only surface that could be considered an emission end plane. The surface 2302C also faces the intended viewer. Yet the reflecting planes 2302A are formed in the surface 2302B, and not in the surface that faces the intended viewer.

The rejection asserts that it would be obvious to use a liquid crystal display, such as taught by Adachi, as a means for display as part of the instrument panel to be viewed by the driver. Even assuming that the liquid crystal display of Adachi is used on an instrument panel as suggested in the rejection, the light guide element 2302 of the liquid crystal display of Adachi would not meet the requirements of claim 11, namely a groove formed in the first major surface that faces toward an intended viewer.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants believe that the claims are allowable. Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is requested. Any questions or concerns regarding this communication can be directed to the undersigned attorney at (612) 455-3800.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dated: June 29, 2005

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